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CARDIN, MIKULSKI, CUMMINGS CALL FOR RECOGNITION OF USS CONSTELLATION'S ROLE IN ENDING SLAVE TRADE

Bicentennial commemoration ceremony will be held aboard ship in Inner Harbor

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senators Benjamin L. Cardin and Barbara A. Mikulski, with Congressman Elijah E. Cummings (all D-Md.) have announced they will introduce a resolution today to recognize the historical significance of the USS Constellation, which is docked in Baltimore's Inner Harbor, and to acknowledge it as an appropriate site to commemorate the bicentennial of the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade this year.

"Slavery left an indelible mark on American history, but as we celebrate 200 years since the United States officially abolished its participation in the transatlantic slave trade, it is with pride that we commemorate this event aboard the USS Constellation, which has found a home in the Port of Baltimore," said **Senator Cardin**. "Through the heroic actions of its crew, the Constellation symbolized a new American way of thinking and internationalism as the literal flagship of American's effort to end the inhumane practice of slavery. It's a lesson worthy of remembrance and celebration today."

"The Constellation saved thousands of Africans from a life of slavery in America, and today it rests in Baltimore's Inner Harbor as a reminder of African Americans' long struggle for freedom and equality. I am proud to introduce this resolution to acknowledge the Constellation's role in the fight," said Senator Mikulski. "Two hundred years after the prohibition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, this resolution preserves this ship's significant part in American history for generations to come."

"The USS Constellation represents a shining moment in one of the darkest points of our nation's history, and I am honored to officially recognize its significance through this resolution," said Congressman Cummings. "The efforts and accomplishments of the Constellation's crew helped lead not only to the liberation of thousands of Africans, but

also to the liberation from oppression and ignorance. It is only fitting that we celebrate the bicentennial of the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade aboard this important vessel.”

The Transatlantic Slave Trade became illegal in 1808, and the USS Constellation was one of the ships used to enforce the law. It sailed to West Africa as a flagship of the eight-ship United States African Squadron. From 1859 to 1861, the USS Constellation and the African Squadron captured a record 14 slave ships and liberated nearly 4,000 Africans destined for a life of servitude in the Americas, including 705 Africans aboard the ship Cora.

On September 25, 2008, the USS Constellation Museum will hold a ceremony to commemorate the bicentennial of the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade aboard the USS Constellation.

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